

We claim:

1. A system for graceful termination of support for session initiation protocol communications on a server, comprising:

a server supporting communications with a client conforming to session initiation

5 protocol;

means for setting a time period for gracefully terminating support for session initiation protocol communications on said server;

means for sending a service unavailable message to said client;

10 means for causing said server to maintain support, until no later than the expiration of said time period for terminating support, for uncompleted session initiation protocol invites accepted by said server before sending said service unavailable message to said client; and

means for terminating support for session initiation protocol communications on said server no later than upon expiration of said time period for terminating support.

15 2. The system of claim 1, comprising means for sending said service unavailable message in response to a session initiation protocol invite received by said server from said client.

3. The system of claim 1, in which said server comprises means for informing said client of said time period for terminating support together with said service unavailable message.

20 4. The system of claim 1, in which said server comprises means for rejecting session initiation protocol service invites received after sending said service unavailable message to said client.

5. The system of claim 1, comprising a second server supporting communications with said client conforming to session initiation protocol.

6. The system of claim 1, in which said client comprises means for sending server status test messages to said server until said server re-establishes support for session initiation protocol communications with said client.

7. The system of claim 3 in which said client comprises means for deleting said
5 server from a list of stream control transmission protocol associations until expiration of said time period for terminating support.

8. A method for graceful termination of support for session initiation protocol communications on a server, comprising the steps of:

10 establishing communications between a server and a client conforming to session initiation protocol;

setting a time period for gracefully terminating support for session initiation protocol communications on said server;

sending a service unavailable message to said client;

15 causing said server to maintain support, until no later than the expiration of said time period for terminating support, for uncompleted session initiation protocol invites accepted by said server before sending said service unavailable message to said client; and

terminating support for session initiation protocol communications on said server no later than upon expiration of said time period for terminating support.

9. The method of claim 8, comprising the step of sending said service unavailable
20 message to said client in response to a session initiation protocol invite received by said server from said client.

10. The method of claim 8, comprising the step of informing said client of said time period for terminating support together with said service unavailable message.

11. The method of claim 8, comprising the step of rejecting session initiation protocol service invites received on said server after sending said service unavailable message to said client.

12. The method of claim 8, comprising the step of causing a second server to support
5 communications with said client conforming to session initiation protocol.

13. The method of claim 8, comprising the step of sending server status test messages to said server until said server re-establishes support for session initiation protocol communications with said client.

14. The method of claim 10, comprising the step of deleting said server from a client
10 list of stream control transmission protocol associations until expiration of said time period for terminating support.

15. A computer-readable medium whose contents cause a computer system to perform steps of a graceful termination of support for session initiation protocol communications on a server, said steps comprising:

15 establishing communications between a server and a client conforming to session initiation protocol;

setting a time period for gracefully terminating support for session initiation protocol communications on said server;

sending a service unavailable message to said client;

20 causing said server to maintain support, until no later than the expiration of said time period for terminating support, for uncompleted session initiation protocol invites accepted by said server before sending said service unavailable message to said client; and

terminating support for session initiation protocol communications on said server no later than upon expiration of said time period for terminating support.

16. The medium of claim 15, in which said steps comprise sending said service unavailable message to said client in response to a session initiation protocol invite received by
5 said server from said client.

17. The medium of claim 15, in which said steps comprise informing said client of said time period for terminating support together with said service unavailable message.

18. The medium of claim 15, in which said steps comprise rejecting session initiation protocol service invites received on said server after sending said service unavailable message to
10 said client.

19. The medium of claim 15, in which said steps comprise sending server status test messages to said server until said server re-establishes support for session initiation protocol communications with said client.

20. The medium of claim 17, in which said steps comprise deleting said server from a
15 client list of stream control transmission protocol associations until expiration of said time period for terminating support.